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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Faculty Assistance and Computing Education Services (FACES) loaner program at Syracuse University and the method used by FACES staff to deliver and keep track of hardware, software, and documentation. The roles of the various people involved in the program are briefly discussed, i.e., the administrator, who handles the loaner queue, and the staff, who handle details and record keeping. The recordkeeping process is outlined; the software and hardware that are available through the program are listed; the instruction and support for all hardware and software that are provided by FACES staff are described; the importance of support from top management is noted; and some approximate costs of the program are provided. Samples of equipment assignment forms and loan agreements are appended. (GL)

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Delivery of Hardware for Syracuse University Faculty Loaner Program

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Presented at The Annual Meeting of The International Association of Computing in Education, Demonstration Session G6, 4:00 P. M. to 5:30 P. M. on March 28, 1989 in The Westin St. Francis-Oxford Room.
Equipment needed: LCD display device for CGA display (e.g. Kodak Datashow)

ABSTRACT

The Faculty Loaner Program consists of two complementary parts: 1. On-site training and support. 2. The loaner program itself.

Proper delivery of equipment is important for effective utilization of teaching methods. The Faculty Assistance and Computing Education Services (FACES) loaner program has an effective method for delivering and keeping track of hardware, software, and documentation. Implementation requires an administrator to handle the loaner queue, a few people to handle details, adequate recordkeeping, adequate software, adequate hardware, instruction and support for all hardware and software, and support from top management.

An administrator is essential to manage the loaner queue and handle equipment requests and distribution.

A small, capable, careful staff which is trained and willing to keep track of certain details relieves the work load of all concerned.

Adequate recordkeeping consists of sheets of paper which itemize loaner items with enough detail so that anyone who is not familiar with the loaner equipment can determine what they are getting and thus, are responsible for; they also help to make sure that the borrower gets what she/he expects and can start using the package without delay. This sort of recordkeeping also ensures that all pieces are returned.

Adequate software consists of enough "supported" software to address most clients' needs; we include a word processor, a spreadsheet, a small data base, a communications program, and system utilities or batch files. We provide support with instruction in the use of software and equipment.

Adequate hardware consists of a computer with power and enough peripherals to handle the software we support. Also, the package of hardware and software can be set up quickly and easily.

Instruction and support for all hardware and software consists of providing hardware and software instruction at the time of pickup, during the loaner period, and afterwards.

Support from top management is important for procuring and maintaining this expensive program.

We try to keep our costs low through site licensing of software and taking advantage of hardware specials.

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Delivery of Hardware for Syracuse University Faculty Loaner Program

Terry Jares
Faculty Assistance and Computing Education Services
Academic Computing Services

The Faculty Loaner Program loans computer equipment to faculty members to enhance their productivity in teaching and research, and to improve their computer skills. At Syracuse University, we have 1650 full and part time faculty. During the first two years (from January, 1987 until December, 1988) of the Faculty Loaner Program, we processed 950 loans and included all types of loans. At first, the program has been aimed at basic computer skills. Faculty members take the equipment to their office or home and use it at their convenience in accordance with Syracuse University policies. The logistics of handling over 100 packages of expensive equipment, many requests (five to seven per week), loan periods of one day to a semester can be a problem. After a faculty member places a request, there usually is a two month waiting period until equipment is available to loan to that person. In spite of all these obstacles, we have developed a method that is simple and works. The benefits we receive are smooth operation, quick turn-around, and no loss of equipment.

Administrator. A loaner program administrator manages the loaner queue, the equipment requests, and schedules disbursal of equipment. Scheduling includes pickups and returns, orientations or "Train and Takes" (training immediately before the faculty member takes the equipment) or arranging for special equipment or software depending on the request or skill of the applicant or the resources available. The loaner program is so popular that faculty have a two month waiting period. We get five to seven loan requests per week. The usual loan period is six weeks for most equipment; portable computers are used in conference loans and have a maximum loan of ten days; there are a few semester loans for special proposals. Loaner equipment is used in special projects of FACES, ACS, and Syracuse University for courseware development, short term needs, and computer education of faculty.

Staff. A capable, careful staff which is trained and willing to keep track of certain details relieves the work load of all concerned. There are two kinds of staff: student workers and technical consultants. Consultants are available for walk-in or by appointment consultations for ANY question about ANY CPU. We try to have one or two graduate student consultants when funding is available. The student workers usually have College Work-Study and take care of the clerical and (mundane) tasks that are necessary for smooth operation.

The tasks of the student workers are mostly clerical but important. Student workers run errands such as deliver flyers or help faculty take equipment to their car. (We do not deliver equipment.) They copy forms that are complete checklists of

hardware, software, and/or manuals which are loaned. These students check equipment in and out (verified against the checklists) to ensure that a complete, workable set of equipment and software is disbursed or received. They also format disks and restore software sets on hard disks. Another task is to screen walk-in or telephone clients and provide simple assistance and/or refer them to the person at FACES who can best help the client.

Recordkeeping. Recordkeeping consists of sheets of paper which list the equipment loaned and an abstract of the conditions under which the equipment is loaned. (See attached forms for examples.) There is enough detail so that anyone who is not familiar with the loaner configurations can determine what they are getting and thus are responsible for. These lists also help to make sure that the borrower gets what she/he expects or should get and can start using the package without delay. Conversely, the lists also ensure that all pieces are returned and is used to check off items that go out or are returned.

Adequate Software. Adequate software consists of enough "supported" software to address most clients' needs. We are familiar with the software we loan and how the software should be configured for the hardware. We include WordPerfect for the word processor, SuperCalc4 for the spreadsheet, PCFile+ for the small data base, Kermit for communications (connection to mainframes and our library's online card catalog) and The S. U. Toolbox as a menu system for facilitating use of the software and which eliminates the necessity for learning an operating system. We also include system utilities and batch files which are used by or that enhance The S. U. Toolbox. For the Macintoshes we provide MacWrite, MacPaint, MacDraw, (and MacKermit upon request). Unsupported software usually is not available for loan for several reasons: 1. We do not have it. 2. We do not own enough copies. We also have a budget. 3. We cannot support every piece of software.

WordPerfect and SuperCalc4 are commercial software which are available at a substantial educational discount. PCFile+ is shareware available at low cost from Chambers and Associates. Kermit is freeware developed by Columbia University. The S. U. Toolbox is freeware available to anyone at no cost and is written in Extended Batch Language. We format hard disks and recopy software from a unified, carefully checked master set of software. Clearing the disk by formatting removes personal files and personal setups or configuration changes which sometimes are left by users and ensures uniformity of distribution. We copy the software to our hard disk (MS-DOS only) computers with FASTBACK by Fifth Generation, Inc. Software for our portable MS-DOS computers (which fits on seven 5.25" DSDD disks or seven 3.5" DSDD disks) are copied disk by disk. Macintosh software which fits on two 800KB DSDD disks is recopied disk by disk.

Adequate Hardware. Adequate hardware consists of a computer with at least 640KB RAM, two disk drives (preferably, one drive is a 20 Megabyte hard disk), a printer, and necessary cables. All MS-DOS computers (except for some of the portable models) loaned have a hard disk. The Macintosh Pluses or Macintosh SEs have only two floppy drives. Any borrower can thus take the machine to her or his home or office, set it up (easily), and start working within an hour. The loaner program consists of two IBM PCs, 20 IBM XTs, 10 Zenith EaZy PCs, two Zenith

PCs, 31 Zenith Z-171s, 5 Zenith Z-181 (dual floppy), and one Zenith SuperSport 286, 20 Macintosh Pluses (two floppy drives), 22 Macintosh SEs (two floppy drive). Printers available are IBM Proprinters, Epson FX-86s, and ImageWriter IIs. These numbers change because some equipment goes out for repairs and other equipment is diverted into other special projects of FACES and ACS.

Instruction and Support. Instruction and support for all hardware and software consists of providing hardware and software instruction at the time of pickup, during the loaner period, and afterwards. The loaner equipment is processed in one room which contains four offices, nine Macintoshes on an AppleShare network, six MS-DOS microcomputers on a Novelle network. We also have some special equipment available there: Apple Scanner, Dest Scanner, Daynafile for Macintosh-to-MS-DOS file transfer (usually with formatting complete), connection to all mainframes on campus and to some of the public microcomputer clusters, and a disk duplicator (duplicates about 60 disks per hour - four at a time.) Also, more importantly, there are four full time staff to answer walk-in questions or to schedule appointments with. Computer consultations are free and available to all faculty or persons who teach at Syracuse University.

Administrative Support. Support from top management is important for procuring and maintaining this important type of expensive program. We have support from our Director and from the Vice President of Information Systems and Computing. Faculty appreciate the loaner program and the computer support by our capable and friendly staff.

Cost. Our cost is approximately US$2000 per computer hardware unit. Through creative financing with site licensing, our MS-DOS software costs are US$340 (WordPerfect = US$125, SuperCalc4 = US$90, PCFile+ = US$45, MS-DOS = US$80, Zenith ships MS-DOS with each machine.) Macintosh software costs US$255 (MacWrite, MacDraw, and MacPaint cost US$85 each, operating system software is included with each Macintosh shipped.) Apple Computer, Inc. has given us a grant of 20 Macintosh SEs and 20 ImageWriter IIs to our loaner program. From time to time, we receive equipment on loan for demonstration for periods of several days to several months.

Summary. Through the several kinds of staff, appropriate hardware and software, recordkeeping, user training, and support of hardware and software, top management support, and careful purchase the faculty loaner program runs smoothly. Quick turn-around of equipment is accomplished using a back-up and restore program called Fastback by Fifth Generation. An MS-DOS computer with a hard disk can be loaned within 20 minutes of a return. Macintosh hardware can be loaned again within 20 minutes of a return because we keep a cache of application disks on hand.

Academic Computing Services
215 Machinery Hall Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY 13244-1260
Faculty Assistance and Computing Education Services

Equipment Assignment Form

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Initial ___

Department_____

Campus Address _____

Campus Phone _____ Home Phone _____
Package Number IBMXT-1

Date out: ___/___/___ Date due: ___/___/___ Date returned: ___/___/___

LOAN AGREEMENT

The following equipment was received by me on the date shown below. I understand that this equipment is being lent to me for a period of _____ days beginning on this date. If I have any trouble with this equipment, I will contact Academic Computing Services at 443 1865.

Equipment owned, leased, or in the care, custody, or control of the University is to be used on University premises in the performance of University functions. Use of equipment costing more than $500 off University premises must be in accordance with the University procedure for such temporary use.

Received by: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Issued by: _____ Date: ___/___/___

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	Serial Number
H	IBM XT CPU	60023745160
H	IBM Color Monitor	0013778
H	Keyboard	-None-
H	IBM Proprinter	1365544

POWER CORD AND CABLES:
CPU power cord /___/ Monitor power cord /___/
Printer Power cord /___/ Printer cable /___/ PAPER /___/

MANUALS: WordPerfect /___/ WordPerfect Workbook /___/ DOS /___/
SuperCalc4 /___/ 10 Minutes to SuperCalc /___/
SC4 Quick Ref Card #1 /___/ SC4 Quick Ref Card #2 /___/

TEMPLATES: WordPerfect /___/ SuperCalc /___/

Use of Major Equipment (Cost $500 or More)
Off University Premises

Authorization Form

Authorization Request Date: _____

Department Name: Academic Computing Services

Department Number: _____

Equipment Description: **IBM XT computer with Hard Disk and Color Monitor.**

Major Equipment Inventory Tag Number: _____

Major Equipment Inventory Value: **$2000**

Period of Authorized Use: From _____ To _____

Address at which equipment will be used: _____

_____

Reason for Use off University Premises: _____

_____

Name of Department Head: **Dana Cartwright, 3rd**

Signature of Department Head: _____

Name of Employee: _____

Signature of Employee: _____

The signature by the employee represents his/her acceptance of liability for the equipment during the time it is not in its identified major equipment inventory location (University premises).

The department head and the employee understand that the equipment must be returned to the department on or before the expiration of the period of authorized use.

A copy of this form must be maintained in the department's files with the department's copy of its major equipment inventory computer printout.

Computer equipment with a value of $5,000 or more may not be used off-campus without prior written notification to the University's Risk Manager. A copy of such notification must be filed with this authorization form.

IBMXT-1